Some Weaves for Upholstery and Curtain Fabrics

BY MYRA L. DAVIS

THE weaver who is anxious to make fabrics of quality usually finds that upholstery and curtain materials present difficulties that are hard to overcome. In both of these types it

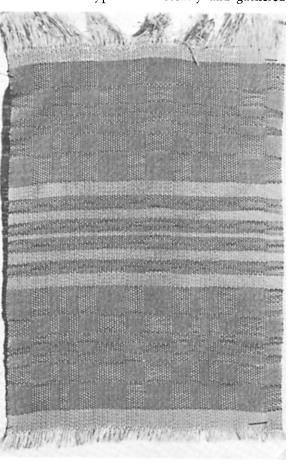
is not sufficient that the fabric be pleasing in color and graceful in design; the fabrics must meet other qualifications which are governed by the uses to which they are put.

Upholstery goods undergo hard usage, yet long wear is expected of them. More particularly they must be woven so firmly that the threads will not pull as the fabric is stretched over the furniture frame, and also the weave must be close enough to prevent the horsehair used in upholstering from pushing itself through. Any experienced decorator experiments with his fabrics to assure himself that they meet these qualifications before he puts them to use. He pulls on the fabric to see if the weave holds its stability; then he will look at it through light to see if it is porous.

Curtain materials present another set of problems. They must be able to break the intensity of light rather than prevent it from filtering through; and in their use for decoration graceful draping is often essential. As sunlight is powerful enough to fade colors, fast dyeing in the yarns is another essential that must not be forgotten.

Many weavers, both in this country and abroad, experiment in these fabrics, and often with

successful results. The collection offered here is based on some Danish fabrics woven in the last few years. A friend of the writer was in Denmark recently and gathered a group of weavings that



Sample No. 2

she thought would be of interest to the American hand weaver. From the group six were selected for reproduction. As there were no drafts it was necessary to work out the weaves through experiment; some had the appearance of double weaving or six-harness work, but good duplicates were made on the four-harness loom, and they are presented here. The yarns, especially the warps, are a little different than in the originals. The Danish weavers use finer counts than we do, and consequently their warps are set much closer, running up to sixty and eighty threads to the inch. Not only is this unnecessary but, as a matter of fact. from the opinion of many people we can say that the results are more happy with our coarser warps spaced

further apart. The patterns come out stronger, yet the fabrics themselves meet all requirements of their classes.

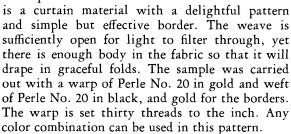
Sample No. 1 — This is a pattern for upholstery fabrics and possesses an unusually simple motif. As the little squares would become monotonous in large areas, this fabric should only be used for footstools, seats of small chairs, and benches. The sample shown here was worked out with

Perle No. 20 in gold as warp, set thirty-six threads to the inch. The binder thread is black Perle No. 20, and the pattern thread is black Perle No. 10. In carrying out this pattern, color combinations of two or three shades can be used; but should there be three it is advisable to have two of them close in hue.

Tabby: 1-4, 2-3. This is not a perfect tabby, but is quite all right for a binder.

Treadling: 12 (1-2), 12 (3-4).

Sample No. 2 — This



Treadling:

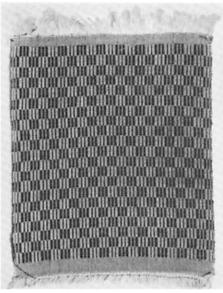
1-3, 2-4, 1-2, 3-4 for 3/8 inch with gold. 12 (1-2, 3-4), 8 (1-3, 2-4), 4 (1-2, 3-4), 4 (1-3,



Sample No. 4



Sample No. 5







Sample No. 3

2-4), 4 (1-2, 3-4), 8 (1-3, 2-4), 12 (1-2, 3-4) with black.

1-3, 2-4, 1-2, 3-4 for 3/8 inch with gold.

2 (1-3, 2-4), 2 (1-2, 3-4), 2 (1-3, 2-4) with black. 1-2, 3-4, 1-3, 2-4 for 1/4 inch with gold.

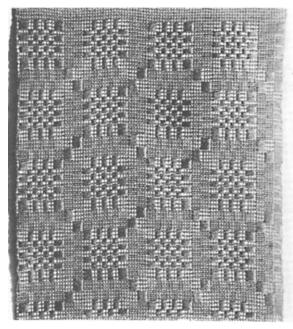
2 (1-3, 2-4), 2 (1-2, 3-4), 2 (1-3, 2-4) with black. 1-2, 3-4, 1-3, 2-4 with gold. This is the center of the broad band.

Sample No. 3 — Many people have a preference for upholstery material that has wool yarn in it. Wools denote luxuriousness and also are soft. To meet this demand many upholstery fabrics, especially those of today, are worked out in cottons as warp with wool as the weft. Of such a type is Sample No. 3.

The design in this fabric breaks up into large squares with ziz-zaggy lines of small blocks enclosed. There is sufficient variety in the composition of the pattern to make it suitable for all sorts of upholstery work. The warp is set thirty-six threads to the inch and consists of Perle No. 20 in gold. The weft is Fabri wool in black.

Treadling: 8 (3-4, 2-1), 4 (2-4, 3-1), 3 (3-4, 2-1), 3 (2-4, 3-1), 3 (3-4, 2-1), 3 (2-4, 3-1), 3 (3-4, 2-1), 4 (2-4, 3-1).

Sample No. 4 — This piece was woven on the tie-up for sample No. 6, and consists of a plain tabby weave. The fabric has a firm body and is suitable for covering small areas where conspicuous or large expanses that are of secondary importance — like the sides and backs of chairs. It is so substantial that it will wear indefinitely. The warp is alternate threads of Perle No. 3 in black and Perle No. 20 in gold. The tabby thread is Perle No. 20 in black. In appearance the fabric is a sweep of black with the gold spottings through it.



Sample No. 6

Sample No. 5 — This sample shows an attractive curtain material that is easy to weave and of interesting enough character to make it a desirable hand-loom product. It can be worked out in mercerized or plain cottons of any color combination. The sample shown here was woven in a 20/2 cotton warp of gold color set thirty threads to the inch; while the weft is 20/2 cotton in red. The plain areas are in a tabby weave; for the open stripes the treadling is as follows:

After a 1-3 tabby shot, weave 1-2, then another 1-3 tabby shot. Beat these three shots closely—leave 1/8 inch space and 2-4, 3-4, 2-4, beat closely, then continue the plain weaving.

Sample No. 6 — This fabric is the most interesting of the group in design and structure. The pattern is pleasing and has a motif so characterful that it is suitable for any type of furniture; in Colonial spirit. The photograph shows some of its charm; in one light it breaks up into stars and squares; in another there are angular circling forms enclosing rectangular motifs; throughout are lights and shadows.

In weaving this piece mercerized threads were used, and the warp was set thirty-six threads to the inch. The warp consists of alternating threads of Perle No. 3 in black and Perle No. 20 in gold, with the first and last thread being Perle No. 3. For the binder a single end of black Perle No. 20 was used, and for the pattern two ends of Perle No. 20 were used. To make one repeat, the following treadling is used; to continue go back to the first treadling direction and thus keep on. The treadling is as follows: 6 (3-4), 3 (2-3), 3 (3-4),

3 (2-3), 3 (3-4), 3 (2-3), 6 (3-4), 6 (1-4), 6 (1-2), 6 (2-3), 3 (3-4), 3 (2-3), 3 (3-4), 3 (2-3), 3 (3-4), 6 (2-3), 6 (1-2), 6 (1-4).

For many reasons Sample No. 3 is worthy of special attention. As was mentioned in the opening words of this article, upholstery fabrics must be sturdy and non-porous; the texture should be firm enough not to pull under ordinary strains. In all of these respects this fabric holds up admirably. Severe tests were made with it, and it held up under all of them.

The secret of its quality lies in the makeup of the warp. A very heavy thread that is unelastic is alternated with a fine thread possessing the same lack of elasticity. The heavy thread supplies adequate body to the fabric, while the fine one closes up the pores that would result from two threads of equal weight being laid side by side. To achieve this it is necessary to set the warp very close, considering the yarn used; any weaver realizes that thirty-six threads to the inch in Perle No. 3 and Perle No. 20 combined is close. This idea can be utilized with any draft that is suitable for upholstery, and it is a good working basis for making such fabrics.

Though this piece was worked out in mercerized cottons, other yarns such as linens, silks, and plain cottons are suitable. Any choice of color combinations is all right.

